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IV. REMARKS

Claims 10 and 13 have been amended, Figures 2, 3, 4, 8, and 11 have been amended, and paragraphs [0022], [0024], and [0028] have been amended. Accordingly, after entry of this amendment, claims 10-16 remain pending in the present application. Applicants request entry of this Amendment.

Oath/Declaration

The Examiner asserts that the Oath or Declaration is defective. Accordingly, the Applicants have submitted herein a corrected Oath/Declaration signed by the inventors.

Drawings

The drawings were objected to because in Fig. 2, numeral "14" on the left side is not pointing to the vehicle steering mechanism, numeral "16" in Fig. 3 is not pointing to the second end of the connector rod and in Fig. 4, and numeral "14" is not pointing to the vehicle steering mechanism. Accordingly, the Applicants have submitted drawing sheets with amended Figures 2, 3, and 4 and respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw these objections.

Further, the drawings are objected to as failing to comply with 37 C.F.R. 1.84(p)(4) because reference character "16" has been used to designate both second end of the connector rod and ball joint in Fig. 8. Accordingly, the

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Applicants have submitted a drawing sheet with amended Figure 8 and respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw these objections.

Additionally, the drawings are objected to as failing to comply with 37 C.F.R. 1.84(p)(5) because they include the following reference signs not mentioned in the description: 44 (Fig. 11) 28 (pg. 6, line3); and 14a (pg.8, line4). Accordingly, the Applicants have submitted a drawing sheet with amended Figure 11 and have amended the specification to remove the reference numeral 28, and therefore respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw these objections.

Claim Objections

The examiner has objected to Claim 5-9 and 17 because of informalities. Accordingly, the Applicants have amended Claim 5 and have deleted Claim 17, and respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw these objections.

Rejections Under 35 USC §102

The Examiner rejected Claims 10-12 under 35 USC §102(b) as being anticipated by Wood Jr. (U.S. Patent 5,080,520). The Applicants respectfully assert that Wood Jr. does not teach each and every element of the invention as described in claim 10. Specifically, the Applicants assert that Wood Jr. does not teach a connector rod wherein "said first end including a radial spherical bearing

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disposed between said first end and the vehicle steering mechanism to allow un-biased pivotal movement of said connector rod in a second plane, approximately orthogonal to the first plane, in response to horizontal movement of said second end of said connector rod in the second plane".

The Examiner asserts that Wood Jr. discloses a "radial spherical bearing", however, Wood Jr. specifically discloses "an elastomeric bearing". Referring to Lines 52-60 of column 3 of Wood Jr.:

"An elastomeric bearing 80 encapsulates the ball portion 72 of the ball member 70, and is bonded to the ball portion 72 and adjacent portions of the projections 76 and 78. The bearing 80 supports the ball member 70 in an assembled position in the chamber in the socket member 40, as shown in FIG. 2. When the ball member 70 is in its assemble position, the ball portion 72 is centered on the longitudinal and transverse axes 46 and 60 of the socket member 40."

Referring to lines 67-68 of column 3 and lines 1-2 of column 4 of Wood Jr.:

"When the ball member 70 is moved relative to the socket member 40, the elastomeric bearing 80 exerts a bias against the ball member 70 urging the ball member 70 back to its assembled position as shown in FIG. 2."

The Applicants have amended claim 10 to more clearly describe the invention by specifying that the spherical bearing allows "un-biased" pivotal motion of the connector rod. The Applicants assert that spherical bearings are well known in the art, and that someone skilled in the art of the present invention would understand that a spherical bearing does not impart a bias to the pivotal motion of components connected thereto. Therefore, the Applicants assert that the amendments to claim 10 do not constitute new matter.

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The "elastomeric bearing" disclosed in Wood Jr. is a specialized type of bearing that reacts in a specific way by imparting a bias to the pivotal motion of the components connected to the elastomeric bearing. Therefore, the Applicants assert that Wood Jr. does not disclose the present invention as described in claim 10, and that claim 10 is not anticipated by Wood Jr. Specifically, the Applicants assert that Wood Jr. does not disclose a spherical bearing that allows un-biased pivotal movement. Accordingly, the Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw these rejections.

Rejections Under 35 USC § 103

The Examiner rejected Claims 13-16 under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Wood Jr. in view of Kondo (United States Patent No. 6,164,860). In light of the arguments made above with regard to the §102 rejection of claims 10-12, the Applicants have amended claim 13 to more clearly describe the invention by specifying that the spherical bearing allows "un-biased" pivotal motion of the connector rod. The Applicants assert that spherical bearings are well known in the art, and that someone skilled in the art of the present invention would understand that a spherical bearing does not impart a bias to the pivotal motion of components connected thereto. Therefore, the Applicants assert that the amendments to claim 13 do not constitute new matter.

The "elastomeric bearing" disclosed in Wood Jr. is a specialized type of bearing that reacts in a specific way by imparting a bias to the pivotal motion of

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the components connected to the elastomeric bearing. Therefore, the Applicants assert that Wood Jr. does not disclose the present invention as described in claim 13, and that claim 13 is patentable over Wood Jr. in view of Kondo. Specifically, the Applicants assert that Wood Jr. in view of Kondo does not disclose a spherical bearing that allows un-biased pivotal movement. Accordingly, the Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw these rejections under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

Conclusion

The Applicants assert that pending Claims 10-16 are patentable. Applicants respectfully request the Examiner grant allowance of these claims. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned attorneys for the Applicants via telephone if such communication would expedite this application.

Respectfully submitted,

Dated: 7-12-2004

By: 

Dan L. Thompson
Registration No. 54,490
Attorney for Applicant

Attachment: New Sheet of Drawings

BRINKS HOFER GILSON & LIONE
P.O. Box 10395
Chicago, IL 60610
Telephone: (734) 302-6000